

Parsons Nursery, Nursery Office
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles
Southeast of Parsons
Parsons Vicinity
Tucker County
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-D

HABS
WVA
47-PARSON,
ID-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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PARSONS NURSERY, Nursery Office

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614338.4327675

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest
Department of Agriculture
Sycamore Street, Box 1548
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Department of Natural Resources
State of West Virginia

Last Use: Nursery poison and pesticide storage; vacant

Significance: The nursery office was built in 1928-30 with
Forest Service general operating funds. A
part of the Parsons Nursery of the
Monongahela National Forest, it was the
administrative headquarters for the nursery
both for the Forest Service and for the
Department of Natural Resources, State of
West Virginia, until 1966. For overview of
Parsons Nursery, see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1928-30, derived from the construction drawings dated July, 1928 and a photograph dated 1930 (drawings WV-237-D-5, WV-237-D-6 and photograph WV-237-15).
2. Architect: The two sheets of architectural drawings for the office are signed by George W. Root. Probably he designed the building together with D. A. Oliver. Root also drafted existing drawings for the workshop/warehouse and pump house. He designed the implement building. Root was Examiner of Surveys for Monongahela National Forest in 1926.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The nursery office was constructed for Monongahela National Forest by contract labor, according to John King.
5. Original Plans: Blue prints for the original construction, two sheets, are housed at the Monongahela National Forest Office in Elkins.
6. Alterations and additions: The bathroom fixtures have been removed. To be demolished: 1990

B. Historical Context:

The nursery office, original wash house (now seed stratification building), workshop/warehouse and pump house were constructed before 1930. The nursery office appears to be one of the first permanent buildings constructed at this site. It was the office for the nursery manager, and housed a laboratory and a bathroom.

In the laboratory, the nursery manager examined germination tests and growth rates of small seedlings. During the entire life of the Parsons Nursery, managers tried to plant seeds acclimated to the region where the trees seedlings would eventually be reforested. This meant that seeds gathered in Allegheny National Forest would be returned to Allegheny National Forest as tree seedlings.

The nursery manager for the Forest Service was Donald A. Oliver from 1928 until 1951. At the transfer of the nursery operation to the West Virginia Conservation Department in 1951, the management of the nursery was transferred to Alvin

Allison. David Denham followed Allison in 1958, David McCurdy then managed the nursery until it closed in late 1985. After 1966, the building was the office of the Assistant Forester, Cheat Ranger District, Monongahela National Forest.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The nursery office is one of a complex of Forest Service nursery buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, shingle style. This building uses materials available from outside Monongahela National Forest, such as yellow pine interior sheathing and sawn cedar shingles, but it follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints.
2. Condition of fabric: Flood damage has shifted the structure askew on its foundation. The sill of the building is not square and is 2'-3' from its foundation. The rear sash and door are missing. Some siding is missing. Roof and chimney are still intact. Building is structurally sound.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 16'-5" x 24'-3". It is three bays wide and two bays deep. It has an attic accessible by ladder.
2. Foundation: 8" poured concrete foundation.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are random width cedar cut shingles applied in courses of 5" exposure. There are 4" plain yellow-painted corner boards. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 9'; the height at the peak is 16'-6".
4. Structural system: The wood frame walls are "2x4's", on 16" centers, covered in 1" thick diagonal sheathing boards--a typical West Virginia mountain framing system, covered in a heavy tarred felt. The pine flooring is laid on "2x8" joists; and the roof rafters are "2x6's" on 24" centers with a "1x6" ridge board. All framing members appear to be yellow pine. There is no attic flooring.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: The front and rear doorway hoods are the same, composed of "2x4" angled

braces supporting a hood covered with in 1" sheathing and asbestos shingles. The front stoop is 1'-3" x 3', rough-sided sandstone. There is no rear stoop.

6. Chimneys: 1'-5" square, interior chimney of wire-cut red brick with poured concrete cap. On the interior, the chimney is plastered and painted.

7. Openings

- a. Doorways and doors: Front and rear center doorway has plain, 5" board architrave with butt-jointed head. Doorway height is 6'-8". The pine front door has single pane of glass above and three horizontal panels below. The rear door is missing. Doorway trim and doors are painted yellow.

- b. Windows and shutters: Each elevation has two windows. Window frames are plain, 5" butt jointed jambs with 3-1/2" under sill board, 1/1 double hung sash. Sash openings are 4'-6" x 2'-8" except the bathroom (storeroom) window which is 3'-8" x 3'-0". The store room window has pressed, translucent glazing. Sash and window trim is painted yellow. There were no shutters. Each window shows evidence of hung, wooden storm sash.

8. Roof: According to Delbert Little, the original roof was sawn cedar shingles. The gable roof now has asbestos shingles and exposed rafter ends with a plain "1x8" fascia. On each gable end the "2x8" rake board is notched so that the "4x4" wall plate and "4x4" ridge piece extends 1/2" beyond the rake boards and has 1/4" bevelled edge. The rake board ends are clipped to meet the fascia. The gable overhang is 10", including the rake board; the eave overhang is 14-1/2", including the fascia. Cornice trim and rafter extensions are painted yellow. Originally, there were yellow-painted wooden, rectangular gutters (see photograph WV-237-J-3).

- c. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The rectangular building originally had the office in the front, laboratory in the rear and a bathroom on the east. Now a storeroom is in the northeast corner which incorporates the chimney in its interior corner, (see sketch plan).
2. Stairways: There is a galvanized, pipe ladder to the attic.

3. Flooring: The floor is 2-1/2" tongue-and-groove pine, shellacked.
 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Both walls and ceiling have 3-1/2" tongue and groove beaded yellow pine boards covered with glossy shellac. The ceiling has been covered with composition board sheeting. Ceiling height is 8'-5".
 5. Openings: Both door and window jambs are the same: 3-1/2" jambs with butt-jointed head. There is a 3-1/2" board under the window sill.
 6. Decorative features and trim: In the storeroom, there is built-in wooden shelving, 1' apart, to the east and south of the window.
 7. Hardware: The door hardware is plain iron with three ball-pinned hinges and a plain, brass-plated iron knob plate with bevelled edge. The knob is missing. Interior window hardware is two, brass-plated iron thumb lifts and common swivel lock.
 8. Mechanical equipment: Heat originally was provided by a coal- or wood-fired stove. Present lighting is two ceiling-mounted florescent fixtures in the main room and one in the storeroom. There is presently no plumbing.
 9. Original furnishings: None.
- D. Site: The building faces southeast, at 147°30'. It survives in its original site, together with most of the original nursery structures. A flagstone walk with mortar joints extends from the rear door. A single white pine tree to the west of the building is a part of the original landscaping. There was a picket front fence and picket gate entry way where the original nursery office drive met the east-west lane to the main highway, according to an 1930 photograph. This photograph also shows a flagpole directly in front of the front door of the nursery office (photograph WV-237-15).

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: two sheets, dated May, 1928, located at Monongahela National Forest Offices, Elkins, WV.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Alvin Allison, 7-23-1989, Charleston, WV, Parsons Nursery supervisor, 1952-57; Londa Bennett, 6-11-

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1989, Davis, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1930-1939; John King, 8-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Dorsey Knight, 10-24-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951.

- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

Monongahela National Forest, Parsons Nursery, Building Location Plan, unpublished manuscript, 1928.

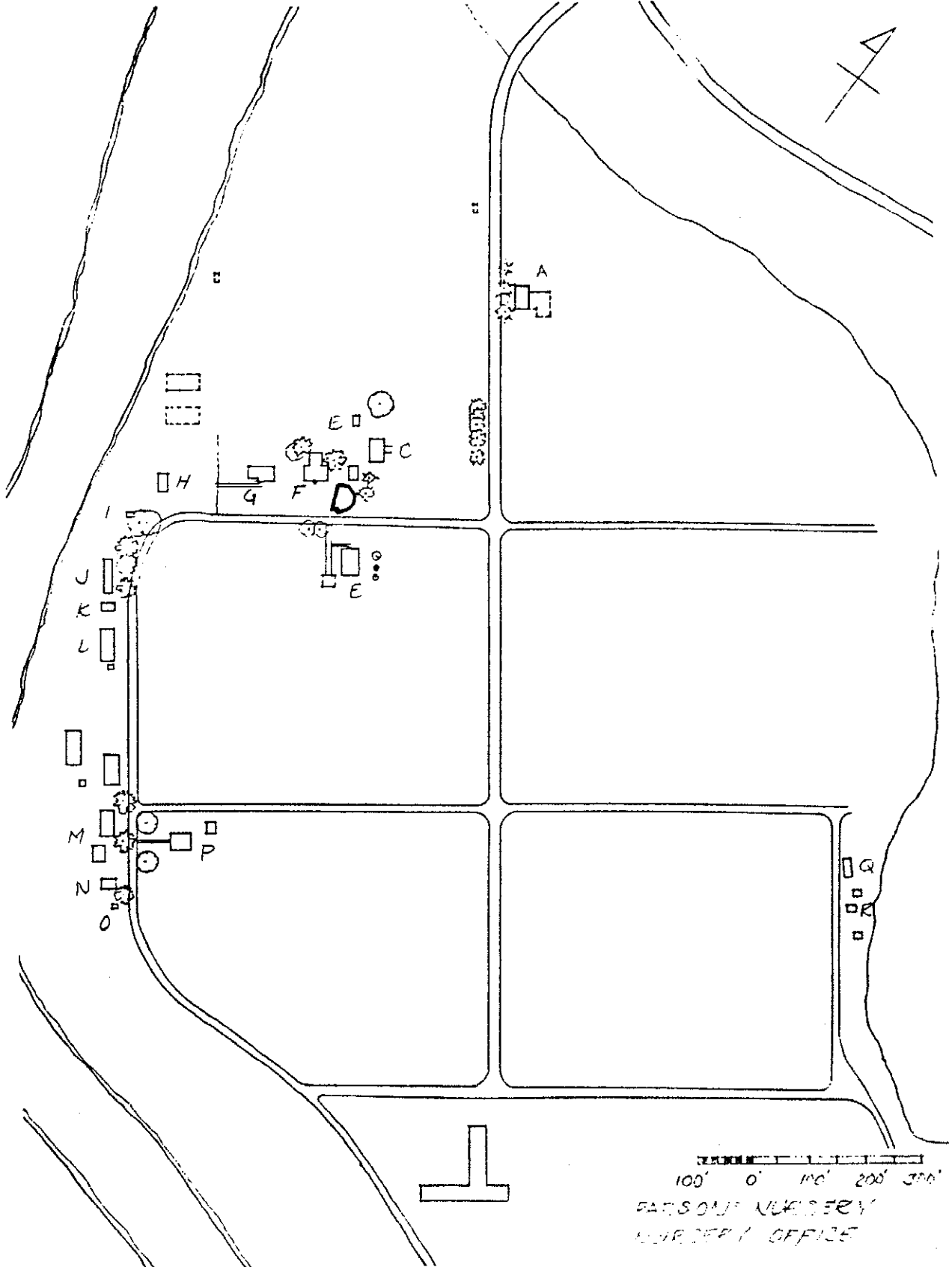
Pierce, R. G., Map Showing Blister Rust Control, Forest Service Nursery, Parsons, WV, unpublished manuscript, 1930.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

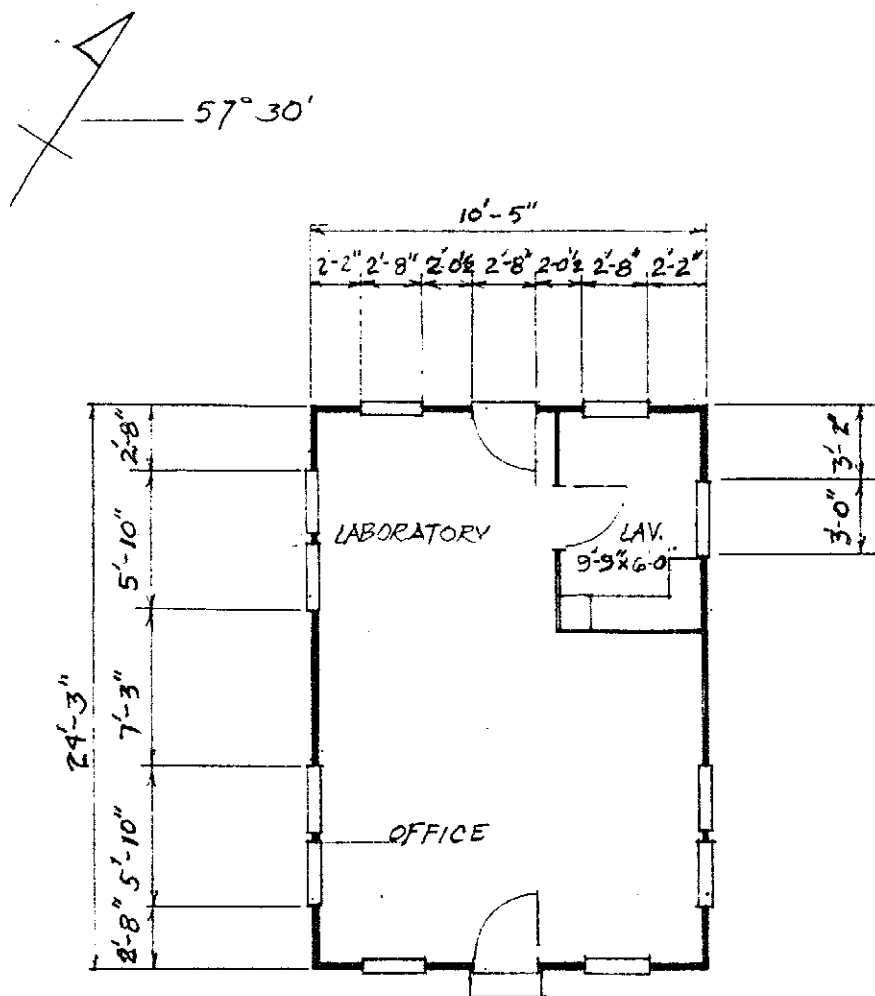
The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery Bottom site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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